THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) Recognising the symbiotic relationship between forests and the tribals, the National Forest Policy of 1988 has laid adequate emphasis on the protection of tribal interests through a number of policy directives which include safeguarding of customary rights, concessions enjoyed by the people: association of tribal people in the protection, regeneration anil development of forests as well as to provide them with gainful employment : replacement of forest contractors by institutions such as tribal cooperatives, labour co-operatives, government corporations etc; protection, regeneration and optimum collection of Minor Forest Produce: f*amily oriented schemes for improving the* .status of the tribal beneficiaries: undertaking integrated area development programmes etc. In pursuance of these policy directives both the Central Government and State Governments have initiated activities and programmes aimed at achieving the above mentioned policy objectives.

(b) In pursuance of the policy directive regarding replacement of contractors by institutions some States have taken steps to execute forestry works like collection, processing and marketing of Minor Forest Produce, logging etc. through Tribal Co-operative Societies/Tribal Development Corporations.

(c) Do not arise.

Consumption of Wood in the Country

3868. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA. Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that a major source of consumption of wood in the country is traditional, religious and sentimental rituals;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the source of wood in the country is gradually diminishing; and

(c) if so, what steps Government propose to take to create mass awareness among the masses of the country activities and to promote use of latest techniques in the traditional and sentimental ritual?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL. NATH): (a) Mo, Sir.

(b) Biotic pressure and requirement of wood is increasing.

(c) Various steps taken to create mass awareness for reduction of use of wood are :—

(i) Use of media and extension services to create awareness about benefits of forests conservation, use of improved smokeless Chullas, Solar Cookers, improved Crematoria and other non-conventional sources of energy.

(ii) Involvement of local people in preparation of micru-plan for afforestation and promotion of wood conservation and wood substitution measures.

(iii) Forest personnels and beneficiaries of Social Forestry Programme are being imparted training for raising *of* nurseries, plantations and forest protection under various schemes.

Rajasthan Me Khanan Mafia Ke Loot-Khasnt

3869 SHRI RAMENDRA KUMAR YADAV "RAVI": Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the government has been drawn to the news items published in Hindi Blitz dated 12th June. 1993 under the cap-lion Rajasthan Me Khanan Mafia Ke Lool-Khasol:

(b) if so. the details thereof, and

(c) what is the reaction of Government thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT' AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH) : (a) to (c) The news item mentioned in the question deals with the alleged support of a former Chief Minister of Rajasthan to mine owners who exploit the minerals causing environmental damage. According to the news item the former Chief Minister is alleged to have said that the notification issued by Government of India is an international conspiracy against exploitation of minerals, the notification would result in unemployment, loss of revenue etc.

It also attributes to one environmental scientist opinion that figures quoted by some pro-mining sources in respect of large scale employment given to labourers as a result of liberally granted mining leases are highly exaggerated and that leases in the Aravalli Ranges are a great danger to the forest cover,